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The editor of THE CRITIC is responsible for the views expressed in Editorial Notes and Articles, and for such only; but the editor is not to be understood as endorsing the sentiments expressed in the articles contributed to this journal. Our readers are capable of approving or disapproving of any part of an article or contents of the paper; and after exercising due care as to what is to appear in our columns, we shall leave the rest to their intelligent judgment.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

MINERALS IN NEW BRUNSWICK.—The people of New Brunswick are becoming gradually awakened to the fact that there are still many undeveloped resources in that Province, and as a result the Crown Land Office has of late been besieged with applicants for searching and prospecting licenses. On October 19th no less than 300 applications for aross were filed. The greatest number of applications has been from Westmoreland County, where it is hoped that valuable gold fields may be opened. The pastur areas of Albert County are also in popular demand. Queens County is said to be about covered with applications for coal searching and prospecting leases, and a small excitement has been engendered by the discovery of asbestos at Macadauvic in York County.

CANADIAN VEGETABLES.—Canadians have reason to be proud of the vegetable display in the Horticultural Building at the World's Fair. It now goes without saying that Canadian apples have won the laurels in the fruit exhibit, and the superiority of the vegetable exhibit is being everywhere acknowledged. Nearly 400 varieties of potatoes are on exhibition, and all varieties of beets, cabbages, and even sweet potatoes are also to be seen. The hop exhibit from British Columbia is pronounced by American experts to be one of the finest ever seen, and even in the lines of canned fruit and vegetables our Canadian firms are distancing competitors from other countries. One pleasing feature of the Canadian department is that the faces of exhibitors and visiting Canadians are alight with pride over these well-shown evidences of our country's resources.

THE CHEMIST VS. THE POISONER.—In a recent number of the *Forum* there is a most interesting article on the chemical analysis as a sure detector of murder by poison. Professor Ogdon Doremus, the learned author, is confident that although the dark sciences of causing death by poison has made vast strides of late, yet the skill of the analytical chemist has kept the same pace, and that when proper researches are made it is impossible for the murderer who has chosen poison for his deadly weapon to escape the consequences of his deed. The search for poison in the dead tissues of a human being may be a work of time. In a recent case it was only after an examination which was continued for three months, that the presence of poison was detected. Prof. Doremus, however, objects decidedly to the modern process of embalming bodies soon after death with poisonous chemical preparations. He is of opinion that a loophole is thus offered to poisoners by which they may effectually conceal the cause of death, and he thinks that the law should interfere in the matter. The entire article, though dealing with a gruesome subject, is of deep and unusual interest.

THEY WANT THE EARTH.—There is not a little agitation in Government quarters over the state of Rideau Hall. The residence of the Governor-General has been a costly affair. What with alterations, additions, refurnishing, etc., the needs of the viceregal court have been pretty steadily before our people. While it is but fitting that the representatives of Her Majesty should be housed in a manner befitting their exalted position, we yet see no reason why, after so many calls have been made upon our people for the needs of the Hall, that it should be characterised as "an old-fashioned rookery, unfit for habitation." Rideau Hall is no palace, but it is and should be a comfortable place of residence.

THE PROVINCIAL OYSTER.—Lovers of that luscious bivalve, the oyster, will be glad to learn that efforts are to be made to prevent the destruction or depletion of our Provincial oyster beds. Mr. Ernest Kemp, an English expert in oyster culture, has been examining the oyster beds of Canada, and he has now made a formal report on the subject to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries. Mr. Kemp attributes much of the falling off in the oyster beds to the use of oyster rakes. In winter especially he considers that the use of rakes is most injurious to the beds. The rakes gather in oysters of all sizes, and the raker who assort the shells leaves the small oysters on the ice while he carries off all that are fit for market. The small oysters thus exposed perish on the ice and when a thaw comes they fall through breaking into and disturbing the beds below. It can thus be readily seen that the removal of the young oysters is a serious matter for while this constant destruction is going on the breeding of the shell fish is greatly interfered with. Another cause of trouble in the beds results from the misdirected work of the mussel-mud diggers. These men are most harmful to the beds for they make great excavations in search of shells and in throwing the refuse mud about, effectually smother both oysters and broods. Mr. Kemp further suggests that a regular close season, from the first day of June to the 15th day of September, shall be observed, that ice fishing and Sunday fishing shall be alike prohibited, and that the use of tongs and dredges in place of the common rakes shall be enforced. Should these precautions be observed he is confident that our oyster beds would speedily become an excellent and steady source of income.

CIVIC REFORMS.—It is about time that the citizens of Halifax should rouse themselves from their torpid condition and take an active interest in civic affairs. The rapid way in which the debt of the city is mounting up is appalling. Ten years or so ago, when the old system of making tenants responsible for taxes was in vogue and a large percentage of taxes was lost, the rate was \$1.10. When the present excellent system, making the taxes a lien and thus assuring their prompt and certain collection with a very small percentage of loss, was adopted, it was supposed that in a few years the rate would be decreased, but in spite of full collections, the rate has gone on increasing, until to-day it is \$1.61, with every prospect of soon reaching the ruinous \$2.00 mark. With surprisingly little to show for it, the debt of the city has reached a cool million, and new borrowing bills are still being moved. The late meeting at the Lyceum is a good indication of an awakened interest in civic affairs, and the question now arises—what reforms are necessary and where shall we begin? Under section 290 of the Act to consolidate and amend the Acts relating to the City of Halifax the Legislature has empowered the Council to assess annually a sum not to exceed \$110,000 for stated civic purposes; and under section 291 it is also authorized to assess annually for some twenty different purposes, including charitable institutions, the payment of interest on all moneys lawfully borrowed, all amounts required for sinking funds authorized by the Legislature, and for the repayment of temporary loans authorized to be assessed for as extra assessment, etc. Formerly, it was the practice to go to the Legislature each year for powers to assess stated sums required for the year's city business, and a return to this old practice might prove salutary, as at present the full amount allowed under the charter is always assessed for, while each year special borrowing bills are being carried through the Legislature for large amounts. The agitation to elect the members of the Council by the vote of the whole city, instead of by wards, as at present, seems to have many more disadvantages than advantages, and before adopting this course, it would be well to wait awhile and see how the change acts in St. John, where it has lately been carried by a popular vote. The laws of the city are excellent, and no improvement is required in them. What is wanted is better material in the Council, and a wise economy in expenditure of the city funds. The selection of Aldermen is left with the voters, and if they will only exercise their powers with due care the Council may be purged of its incompetent members, and their places filled with representative citizens. Not that there is not plenty of good material in the present Council as there is, but a judicious weeding out would vastly improve its ability to deal with the very serious problems which a period of reckless extravagance has precipitated.